



LOS ANGELES COUNTY REGIONAL PARK AND OPEN SPACE DISTRICT

May 13, 2008

The Honorable Board of Directors
Los Angeles County
Regional Park and Open Space District
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Directors:

**ALLOCATE SPECIFIED EXCESS FUNDS AVAILABLE TO
THE FIRST SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT TO
THE MOUNTAINS RECREATION AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY AND
AUTHORIZE AWARD AND ADMINISTRATION OF AN EXCESS FUNDS GRANT TO
THE WATERSHED CONSERVATION AUTHORITY FOR
THE SOUTH GATE RIPARIAN RESTORATION ACQUISITION PROJECT
(FIRST DISTRICT – 3 VOTE MATTER)**

SUBJECT

These actions will allocate \$450,000 in Specified Excess Funds available to the First Supervisorial District to enable the Watershed Conservation Authority to purchase 6.71 acres of vacant land along the Los Angeles River in South Gate. The acquisition will offer potential habitat restoration, enhanced public access along the lower Los Angeles River and opportunities for retaining regional storm runoff on site to improve the quality of water discharged into the river.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT YOUR BOARD:

1. Find the proposed actions exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act, for the reasons cited herein.

2. Allocate Specified Excess Funds available to the First Supervisorial District in the amount of \$450,000 to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority for the South Gate Riparian Restoration Acquisition Project.
3. Authorize the Director of Parks and Recreation, in his capacity as Director of the Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District to award a grant to the Watershed Conservation Authority (WCA), after the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority assigns the right to apply for funds to the WCA, when applicable conditions have been met, and to administer the grant as of the date of this action and pursuant to procedures in the Procedural Guide for Specified and Per Parcel Projects.

PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Approval of the recommendations will allocate \$450,000 in Specified Excess Funds available to the First Supervisorial District to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) to fund the South Gate Riparian Restoration Acquisition Project. The MRCA, which is the designated recipient of Specified Excess Funds for projects along the Los Angeles River under the Safe Neighborhood Parks Proposition of 1996 (1996 Proposition), will assign the right to apply for the funds to the Watershed Conservation Authority (WCA).

The South Gate Riparian Restoration Acquisition Project consists of the acquisition of 6.71 acres of land along the lower Los Angeles River in South Gate. As part of a larger development project, the South Gate Riparian Restoration Project, the site will offer potential habitat restoration, enhanced public access along the lower Los Angeles River, and opportunities for retaining regional storm runoff on site to improve the quality of water discharged into the river. The total cost of the acquisition project is \$650,000, which includes \$450,000 of available First District Specified Excess Funds and \$200,000 of grant funds from the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy.

The 1996 Proposition requires that agencies to which funds were allocated under the Safe Neighborhood Parks Propositions of 1992 and 1996 encumber all such funds prior to receiving grants of Excess Funds. The MRCA and the WCA have met this requirement.

It is also recommended that the Director of Parks and Recreation be authorized to award a grant to the WCA, when applicable conditions have been met, such as grantee qualifications and consistency between the projects and requirements of the 1996 Proposition, as well as grantee agreement with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements for the project, and to administer the grant under procedures previously approved by your Board.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

The proposed recommendations further the Board approved County Strategic Plan Goal No. 1 (Service Excellence), Goal No. 4 (Fiscal Responsibility), Goal No. 5 (Children and Families' Well-being), and Goal No. 6 (Community Services), by allocating Excess Funds for enhanced environmental stewardship and recreational opportunities along the Los Angeles River in the First Supervisorial District.

FISCAL IMPACT/FINANCING

Sufficient appropriation for the grant in the amount of \$450,000 is budgeted in the First Supervisorial District portion of the Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District Excess Funds Project Fund, HD6.

FACTS AND PROVISIONS/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

The 1996 Proposition provides a method for determining each fiscal year the amount of funds available in the following fiscal year to fund capital improvement projects in addition to the amounts specifically identified for projects in the Safe Neighborhood Parks Propositions of 1992 and 1996. The recommended grant would be funded from the Excess Funds available to the First Supervisorial District for highest priority regional open space and recreation projects including projects along the Los Angeles River and its tributaries.

The Board may establish additional conditions on grants of Excess Funds. The Director of Parks and Recreation would be authorized to award a grant when all applicable conditions have been met. Any funds allocated by the Board, but not encumbered by award of a grant contract in the same fiscal year, shall be available for allocation by the Board in the following fiscal year.

Your Board approved a Procedural Guide on June 17, 1997, to govern the administration of Regional Park and Open Space District grants for Specified and Per Parcel projects. This Procedural Guide would appropriately govern the administration of the recommended additional grant as well.

CONTRACTING PROCESS

A Grant Project Agreement will be entered into and administered under authority delegated to the Director of Parks and Recreation and pursuant to the Procedural Guide approved by the Board in 1997. The Project Agreement will be approved as to form by County Counsel.

IMPACT ON CURRENT SERVICES (OR PROJECTS)

The recommended project will provide additional environmental stewardship and recreation opportunities along the Los Angeles River in the First Supervisorial District.

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION

All public agency projects funded by the Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District are required to comply with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) as a condition of the grant. The lead agency is responsible for preparing the appropriate environmental documentation for the project. The Watershed Conservation Authority is the lead agency for the South Gate Riparian Restoration Acquisition Project.

The proposed administrative actions are not subject to CEQA in that the actions do not meet the definition of a project according to Sections 15378 (b)(4)(5) of the State CEQA Guidelines, because the actions are administrative activities for government grants which by their terms do not involve any commitments to any specific projects which may result in a potentially significant physical impact on the environment.

The Honorable Board of Directors
May 13, 2008
Page 5

CONCLUSION

Please instruct the Executive Officer-Clerk of the Board to return one conformed copy of this action to the Chief Executive Office, Capital Projects Division, and to the Department of Parks and Recreation.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Wicker for", written over the printed name "Russ Guiney".

Russ Guiney
Director, Parks and Recreation

RG:IV:LB:REGIONALPARKANDOPENSPOCEDISTRICT(WCA BL)

c: Chief Executive Officer
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors (22)
County Counsel